



EARTHCHECK

For more information about how EarthCheck can help your business, please email: andre.russ@earthcheck.org

EarthCheck Pty Ltd
PO Box 12149
George Street
Queensland 4003
Australia

P: +61 7 3238 1902
E: andre.russ@earthcheck.org
W: www.earthcheck.org



ORION EXPEDITION CRUISES

Founded in early 2004, Orion Expedition Cruises (OEC) is regarded as the leading operator of five-star expedition cruising in the Australasian region. It operates the 106-passenger expedition vessel Orion in the Kimberley region of Australia, the East Coast of Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and the Sub Antarctic Islands, Melanesia, the Spice and Forgotten Islands and Antarctica.

The destinations visited by Orion have some of the most pristine and sensitive wilderness areas on the planet, with little or no infrastructure to support visits by hundreds of people at one time. Consequently, OEC understands that it has a social responsibility to develop a marine tourism blueprint that is not only sustainable but also at the forefront of environmentally sound operating practices.

Orion Expedition Cruises was the first ship in its class to undergo EarthCheck's benchmarking program, effectively necessitating the creation of new benchmark standards. It has since been awarded Bronze Level Status.

In addition to having a Sustainability Policy in place, nine of the assessed EarthCheck indicators are at or above the Baseline level. From the benchmarking data provided, four indicators, Community Commitment, Community Contributions, Cleaning Products and Pesticide Products, are at or above the Best Practice level.

EARTHCHECK BRONZE BENCHMARKING RESULTS

Community Commitment was Best Practice at **100 per cent**.

Community Contributions was **2.0 Points** better than Best Practice.

Cleaning Products was **5.7 Points** better than Best Practice

Energy Consumption (MJ / Passenger Night) was **19.9 per cent** better than the Baseline

Water Savings Rating was **20.8 Points** better than the Baseline

For Orion, sustainability is a core component of the company's originating vision and values.

Featuring the latest German designed environmental management technology, Orion's sustainable features extend from its energy efficient engine to the collecting of air conditioning condensation and recycling of grey water onboard.

It also has developed self-contained systems that support remote voyages that extend up to 22 days at sea.

Orion II, arriving in June 2011 and based in South East Asia, will offer a wide range of expeditions including the Inland Sea of Japan, the Russian Far East, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, the Indonesian archipelago, and Borneo.

CRUISELINER SECTOR BENCHMARKS

In 2010, the worldwide benchmarking authority EarthCheck again acknowledged Orion's commitment to sustainability and operational performance.

Awarded EarthCheck Bronze Benchmarked status under their globally recognised environmental program, the award recognises Orion Expedition Cruises as working towards the world's highest environmental standards, benchmarking energy and water consumption, total waste production and community commitment.

Orion was the first ship in its class to undergo the benchmarking program, effectively necessitating the creation of a new benchmark sub-sector.

Orion achieved Best Practice results in six areas: Water Saving, Waste Recycling, Community Commitment, Community Contributions, Cleaning Products, and Pesticide Products.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Community partnership forms the basis of all OEC itinerary design. Orion representatives approach traditional owners, chiefs or heads of communities, tribes or villages of potential destination, starting a dialogue about their lives, their needs, and the opportunity of shared experience.

In most instances, Orion works with communities devoid of tourism experience, encouraging communities to interact with them in ways that are sensitive to their needs and interests. They see the potential benefit to their people, but need investment, commitment and support.

Orion believes its role is to nurture the partnership, ensuring both parties work together to protect their natural resources, sustain their wellbeing and support cultural heritage. Specialist Expedition Teams ensure guests have an intimate understanding of the values and culture of the communities prior to arrival.

For example, OEC has a close partnership with Watam, a remote village of just 300 people located on the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea.

In such a remote community with no roads or means of communication, money has little value. Therefore, OEC contributes to the social wellbeing of the locals by providing vital products and services such as mosquito nets, malaria medication and materials for the local school, as well as the use of OEC's onboard doctor whilst Orion is in Watam.

In fact, Orion's onboard doctor has reported an improvement in the health of the locals, specifically a reduction in the cases of malaria presented.

ANTARCTIC TREATY

OEC is the only Antarctic operator currently applying the EarthCheck standard to its operations.

While visiting the Antarctic and Sub Antarctic Islands, Orion complies with the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

Strict procedures designed to protect this fragile environment include; conducting environmental assessments, ensuring all systems are self-sufficient, and monitoring environmental impacts of all activities.

OEC is also a member of IAATO – The International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators; an organisation designed to advocate, promote and practice safe and environmentally responsible private-sector travel to the Antarctic.

